

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 AID-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 EB-11 COME-00 INT-08 SCI-06 FEA-02

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FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7651

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAIGON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE PRIORITY

UNCLAS PHNOM PENH 12112

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR PFOR CB VS

SUBJ: KHMER PRESS HEATS UP OVER OIL DISPUTE

1. EARLY LAST WEEK THE PHNOM PENH KHMER-LANGUAGE PRESS HANDLED EVENTS SURROUNDING THE GVN NOTE TO THE GKR OVER THE ELF OIL RIG IN VERY LOW KEY FASHION, PRESUMABLY ON DIRECT ORDERS FROM THE GKR.

2. ON SEPTEMBER 7 THE TONE CHANGED SLIGHTLY, BUT WAS STILL LIMITED TO EDITORIALS PROCLAIMING THAT THE ISLAND OF POULO WEI IS AND ALWAYS HAS BEEN KHMER TERRITORY, A CLAIM NOT DIRECTLY CHALLENGED IN THE PUBLISHED NOTE FROM THE GVN WHICH LIMITED ITSELF TO COMMENTING UPON THE OIL RIG, LOCATED WELL TO THE SOUTH OF THAT ISLAND.

3. THE EDITORIALS AND PRESS COVERAGE OF SEPTEMBER 8 THROUGH 10 HAVE SHOWN A RISING CRESCENDO OF SHRILL-NESS IN ATTACKS AGAINST THE "ANNAMITES." FOR EXAMPLE: THE KHMER WILL STOP ANYONE FROM TAKING AWAY THE ISLAND OF KOH
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ACH SES (THE ANCIENT KHMER NAME, WHICH LITERALLY MEANS

HORSE EXCREMENT, A NAME SAID TO HAVE BEEN CHANGED TO POULO WEI TO SATISFY A FASTIDIOUS FRENCH GOVERNOR). THE ANNAMITES ARE SHOWING THE WORLD THEY HAVE NO FRIENDSHIP FOR THE KHMER PEOPLE. IF THEY TAKE UP ARMS, WE'LL TAKE UP ARMS. AND IF THEY MAKE TERRITORIAL CLAIMS, WE'LL CLAIM KAMPUCHEA KROM (FORMER CAMBODIAN AREAS OF THE MEKONG DELTA) AND KOH TRAL (KHMER NAME FOR PHU QUOC ISLAND). ONE PAPER PUBLISHED THE SUBSTANCE OF AN INTERVIEW OF SEPTEMBER 7 WHICH GENERAL SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ, FANK CHIEF OF STAFF, IS ALLEGED TO HAVE GIVEN IN HIS OFFICE TO A FOREIGN JOURNALIST, IN WHICH HE HAS DECIDED TO DIE WITH HIS SOLDIERS FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE KHMER TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND NEVER TO BOW HIS KNEE BEFORE ANY FOREIGN AGGRESSOR.

4. BY SEPTEMBER 10 THE EDITORIALISTS HAD TURNED THEIR ATTENTION SOMEWHAT TOWARDS THE UNITED STATES, WHOM THE KHMERS ARE NOW EXPECTING TO TELL THE VIETNAMESE THEY CANNOT USE U.S.-FURNISHED WARSHIPS IN THIS FASHION. ONE BIT OF WILD SPECULATION CLAIMS (FALSELY) THAT THERE IS NO AMERICAN COMPANY INVOLVED IN THE DRILLING; THUS THE WHOLE INCIDENT MAY BE U.S.-INSPIRED TO FRIGHTEN THE FRENCH INTO YIELDING THEIR PLACE TO AMERICAN COMPANIES. ONE PAPER SAYS THAT CAMBODIA SUFFERS NOT ONLY FROM WAR, BUT ON THE OTHER HAND FROM THE BANDITRY OF HER HEREDITARY ENEMIES, COMMUNIST AND NONCOMMUNIST. ANOTHER CLAIMS THAT TERRITORY IS ABOVE IDEOLOGIES -- THE ANNAMITES ARE AS GREEDY AS THE ANNAMITE COMMUNISTS: WE THEREFORE CALL ON ALL KHMERS -- ROUGES, RUMDOHS, IN OR OUT OF THE COUNTRY -- TO RECONCILE THEMSELVES AND UNITE AS A SINGLE MAN FOR THE DEFENSE OF KHMER TERRITORY. AND ANOTHER -- ON THE THAI SIDE THEY HAVE STOLEN NUMEROUS PROVINCES FROM US SUCH AS NOKOREACH, BORIRAM, KOKAN, SURIN, PRACHIN, CHANTABUN, SISAKET, AND THEY CONTINUE TO PILLAGE OUR ART WORKS. ON THE ANNAMITE SIDE WE HAVE LOST ALL COCHIN CHINA, AND NOW THEY THREATEN TO STEAL OUR OIL. THIS OIL AFFAIR CONSTITUTES THE LAST TOLL OF THE CLOCK BELL CALLING ALL KHMER TO RALLY FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE COUNTRY.

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5. NOT TO BE OUTDONE, THE KC CAMBODIAN INFORMATION AGENCY IN A CLANDESTINE FRENCH LANGUAGE BROADCAST AT 1245 GMT ON SEPTEMBER 9 (FBIS BANGKOK DO 91635), BLAMES IT ALL ON THE PHNOM PENH TRAITORS AND THE SAIGON PUPPETS, WHO ARE ALL AGENTS OF U.S. NEOCOLONIALIST POLICY. THE TRAITORS HAVE SOLD ALL THEY COULD -- THE COUNTRY AND NATIONAL HONOR -- TO PROLONG THEIR LAST DAYS. REGARDING THE IRREFUTABLE OPEN AGGRESSION OF THE

SAIGON PUPPET NGUYEN VAN THIEU CLIQUE, THE CAMBODIAN PEOPLE, FUNK AND GRUNK DECLARE THEY WILL RESOLUTELY DEFEND THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND NATIONAL HONOR OF CAMBODIA.

6. COMMENT: THE CAMBODIAN PRESS IS GETTING PRETTY EXCITED. IT MAY BE DIFFICULT FOR THE GKR TO DAMPEN IT DOWN QUICKLY, IN THE ABSENCE OF NEW AND CALMING NEWS.
KEELEY

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